

## Wind Presence

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Gerard buttoned his white coat as a chilly wind drifted into the air and slapped him in the face. As he walked through the front entrance of the hospital, shivering with discomfort, he couldn't help but think that today would be different from any other. Like a guiding presence, the wind blew towards the west, drawing Gerard closer to a patient in room E-4.

A few days ago a man was brought into the hospital. The doctors found him lying in the hospital alley unconscious and without any identification.

The man is suffering from amnesia, psychological trauma, or perhaps he's pretending just to hide a hidden truth. Whatever happened to him, it made the man so scared that room E-4 has become his sanctuary. The man adopted agoraphobic symptoms and fears that if he leaves the room, something bad will happen.

Gerard has been assigned to make a daily routine to talk to the man and try to figure out what exactly happened, and why he believes outside the room, there's something dreadfully wrong.

As Gerard walked into the room, he saw the man staring out the window.

With wandering eyes and a heart of forbidden secrets, the man heard sounds of footsteps. "You've come to convince me like all the other doctors, haven't you?"

Gently shutting the door, "How are we today?" asked Gerard as he took a seat on a chair.

"Nice weather isn't it?" The man gazed through the frames of glass.

"Will you break the ice today?" Gerard crossed his legs.

"My name isn't important. I can tell you that much. And no, I won't tell you why I can't leave this room."

"You mean *won't* leave," interrupted a correcting Gerard. He uncrossed his legs and continued to sit more properly. "What do I have to do to make you talk? What happened three days ago?"

The man didn't say anything, and Gerard swiftly became impatient, shaking his head, "You can't stay here forever."

"Yes I can, because what you and the others don't seem to realize, if I leave, *I'll die!*"

Gerard's eyes widened with curiosity and suddenly his attention became more intrigued than when he had first entered the room. "Why do you believe you'll die?"

The man gave a smirk as if the entire world seemed amusing. "You wouldn't understand."

"Well, what should I do to make myself understand?"

"It's not that simple," explained the man. "There are things outside this room, evil things. Don't ever let them in here. Understand!"

Gerard noticed the man's change in mood, almost posing a threat. "Excuse me sir. I don't understand what you're babbling about, but there is no need to yell. There is nothing to be afraid of outside. No evil, okay, nothing is wrong."

"There *is* something *wrong* with this world. I can sense it in the wind. It's a weird feeling, but it's very real. I believe you can feel it too, but won't admit."

Gerard responded with precision. "I don't know what you're talking about, but I want to learn. If you let me in, I can help. Please..."

The man locked his eyes, almost like under hypnosis, and spoke with a very distinct chilling voice that made Gerard uneasy. "The world is not what it appears to be." Then the man stared outside again. "The wind is getting violent. Thank you for your time doctor."

"But I'm not finished," protested Gerard.

"I have nothing else to say. I'll see you tomorrow. We'll talk more then."

"You didn't explain anything."

The man reassured, "I believe in you doctor. I think you're different from the others. You'll understand, in time."

Gerard left it at that and sprung from his seat. "Tomorrow when I walk in here, your gonna tell me exactly what happened, why, and who did this to you." Gerard waited for a response but the man endlessly gazed out the window accumulating thoughts and secrets in his head, thoughts and secrets Gerard wish he knew. But there was nothing more he could do at the moment. The man was not willing to talk, but Gerard made a promise to himself he would find a way.

As Gerard stood under the doorway with his back turned, the man said one last thing before departing, and Gerard felt even more uneasy when the discussion of darkness was re-introduced into this abnormal setting. "Don't forget what I said doctor. There are evil things outside this room. Don't ever let them in here. Ever...!"

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There was something floating in the air that moonless night. The wind was soaring towards the east and started to uplift into a vortex, like a twister destroying all that opposed it. The breeze howled with a violent force and surrounded a nearby residential street.

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Inside a house, a woman sat in the kitchen. Amy cried with tears of fright and an overwhelming claustrophobic feeling. She was talking on the phone to someone very special. Tears constantly flowed like a stream, enough for the sadness to darken the shadowy night, the lonesome night. Her hand wiped away blotches of smeared make up covering her eye bruises and bags. The bruises were caused by another loved one. She thought she knew what love was, but was very wrong. As she sat on the chair with heartbroken words, the woman wished that a miracle would happen tonight. She prayed that her fucking wife beating husband wouldn't come home tonight, not ever again. Tonight would be the night, she thought. She hoped her drunken husband would drive into oblivion, and never again he could ever lay another hand on her. She prayed this would live to be true.

As Amy sat crying and talking on the phone, the wind blew viciously faster and more determined to make an impact on her abusive marriage.

“He’s getting worse. I don’t know what to do,” said Amy slumped over with her messy hair shrouding her face. “I feel trapped, like I can’t leave. He threatened to kill me if I tried,” she buried her face under her swollen arms.

“Where is he?” said the voice on the other end.

“Coming home from work. He’s probably driving drunk as always.”

“You can’t keep living like this.”

“I know, but he’ll kill me. Kill me if I tried. And my family…”

“Calm down Amy, we’ll get through this. We’ve been friends for years. You know you can always come to me for help. Please, just let me in.” The voice attempted to reassure her, but Amy was already lost, emotionally and physically. She cursed the day she got married and should have known he would change. He wanted to treat her like shit, to torment, molest, and abuse her in so many ways. She was like an object, a punching bag to her husband. That’s all she was to him, a life size punching bag that served only one purpose, to relieve anger and frustration.

Amy felt so weak and powerless, “I don’t know what to do,” she said sniveling.

“You have to fight back! If you give up now, then your family will be his next target!”

“Why does he have to be so mean? Why is he so evil!?” Amy’s words were drowned with more sorrow. After recapping a moment to speak, something outside besides the wind startled and alarmed her senses. “Hold on a sec.” She pried open the shades with her bruised fingers, enough to see all the commotion outside. A Siamese cat and pit bull fought on the side of the house. She couldn’t help but feel sorry for the cat. Amy felt sympathy. It shredded and tore the poor thing apart and then she cried more. It was a sad sight to see.

The pit bull barked at the corpse and ran down the street into the mouth of darkness. She walked away from the window and took a seat in the kitchen. “There was a dog outside and I witnessed it killing a cat!”

“That’s horrible!” the voice was stunned. “Listen Amy. Maybe you should go to bed.”

“But if I do, then my guards down. I can’t defend myself if I’m asleep.” Amy looked at the clock. “He’ll be back soon.” Suddenly, speaking of the devil, a blinding head light pierced through the blinds and a truck pulled into the driveway. Stumbling footsteps were followed and she heard the sound of keys injecting into to the front door key hole. Like a burst of explosion, the door swung open so hard it left an indent on the wall. She had no time to say goodbye or hang up the phone. She ran away from the living room and back to the kitchen, hoping she would flee in time to escape the drunk’s fists of unreasoning. But something was wrong this time, she thought. Amy didn’t hear his breathing or footsteps anymore. He didn’t enter the living room yet. For the first time she at least had the courage to turn around.

She stared outside into the darkened night. The wind was blowing awfully fast. Something about the eeriness made her uneasy, and where was her husband? Something was wrong outside, and the wind was a beckoning presence. She felt drawn to wander the night, and in this moment she wasn’t afraid of her husband. There’s was something dreadfully wrong in the outside world. Amy stepped out and was consumed by the unknown.

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When Gerard entered the room the next day, he found the mysterious man standing in the same position mesmerized by the breezy currents. Today the wind was even deadlier.

“It’s time to confess,” said Gerard taking the same seat from yesterday. “At least tell me what you were doing in the alley.”

“To tell you the truth, I don’t remember how I got there. I had just gotten off work and drove home. I got out of my truck and walked towards the front porch. Everything after that is a blur. I have no clue how I ended up in the hospital alley.”

“Do you take drugs?”

“Never,” said the man.

“Do you have any enemies? Is there anyone in your life that would want to hurt you?”

The man said patiently, “I know your doing your job, but none of these tedious questions will get you anywhere in life.”

Gerard looked puzzled and impatient. “How else do you expect me to understand what happened. Without questions there are no answers.”

“Sometimes the answers will come to you if you give them time.” The man had a certain way with words that almost made Gerard feel like this was some kind of brain teaser.

“I don’t have time for riddles. I don’t care if you’re sheltered to this room. Either willingly or by force, you’re leaving this hospital. Make the choice!”

The man gave another smirk. “Threats don’t mean a thing to me. Instead of concerning yourself whether I leave or not, you should focus on the real problem. I told you there is evil outside this room.”

Gerard clasped his hands behind his head and tilted his neck back looking at the ceiling and sighed, “This joke is getting old mister,” Gerard said with disconnecting frustration.

“It’s not a joke,” the man proclaimed. “The presence of evil is very real. It’s all around us, everywhere. But this room is safe. For some reason it feels like the only place.”

“Okay, so this evil, what exactly is it? I’m not saying I believe, just curious,” said Gerard.

“I don’t know what it is, but I can feel it getting closer everyday. And the wind keeps getting stronger,” the man pointed outside the window, “...and *faster*.”

Gerard couldn’t help but crack a smile. “Are you suggesting the wind is evil?” and laughed briefly then held in the rest.

“No, I’m not suggesting that. But evil can be like a parasite. *All it needs is a host. It can even shape shift one’s appearance.*”

Gerard wanted to understand his patient, but his mind seemed so bottled up with confusion and irrationality. “Are you religious?”

“It’s none of your business.”

“Fine,” Gerard said and walked over towards the bed taking a closer seat to the man. Gerard knew that nothing he could possibly say would make the man talk.

However, Gerard was determined not to give up. Under some circumstance, the patient

trusted Gerard and felt that he was different from everyone else. This gave him more of an advantage over the other doctors, Gerard thought.

“The world can be a strange and beautiful place,” said the man and he placed a hand on the window glass. “Yet, fear and suffering can possess one.”

The clouds were transforming and foreshadowing a possible approaching storm. It had been windy for days and no rain ever came. But the weather was changing to a darker side. The sky was filled with gloom, and the wind continued its assault of horrific gusts never showing any signs of subsiding. In spite of this constant bizarre breezy environment, the man in room E-4 held the most obscure behavior, even more so than the wind.

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The man pressed his smooth face against the window, pondering thoughts of deep relaxation. Gerard sat on the foot of the bed just quietly watching his patient and trying to figure out what was really going on here.

Gerard couldn't help but think that something else was behind the weather, this man, this room, but didn't want to accept the factor of evil playing a role in all of this. But still, Gerard couldn't help but think of it. *It is a very strange and beautiful world*, he thought.

“This evil has a name,” the man turned and locked his eyes with Gerard's.

“What? It has a name?”

“Yes,” the man looked frightened and almost hesitant to mention what the name was, but then his confession spilled. “STAN!”

“Its name is STAN?” Gerard said and leaned forward with full attention. At last he felt like he was getting somewhere. “So you're saying this thing has a name. You call it Stan? Right?”

The man used his index finger over his lips signaling Gerard to remain quiet. “Shush...don't say its name so loud. I shouldn't have said it myself. It could be listening this very moment.”

“It's here? In the hospital?”

“It could be anywhere it wants. I can sense its presence. I can't explain it but I know for sure this evil entity is forbidden to enter the room.” The man seemed petrified and disturbed for bringing up the name of the evil that haunts him.

“Entity? You're claiming it's a ghost?”

“I guess you can call it that, but I'm not sure what it is exactly,” corrected the man.

Then, just as Gerard was getting caught into the fascination of “*Stan*,” the man walked back to the window and gazed outside as if under some sort of elusive trance, standing there in silence.

Gerard noticed that this may be the end of today's session, but refused to stop. “Thanks, but we're not through yet. I have more questions to ask.”

“Sorry Doc. I have nothing else to say.”

“I don't know how much longer we can do this. You're taking up one of our rooms. I've warned you before!” Glancing at his watch, Gerard realized the session had carried on for too long. He had appointments to attend. “I have other patients. They want

my help. Unlike some people!" Gerard stamped out of the room slamming the door behind. It was a miscalculation of professionalism on his part, but Gerard was so pissed off at the man.

The outside hallway gave normality to Gerald's life again. He felt like his normal self. One of the nurses pushing a wheeled table passed by him and decided to have a quick chat.

"How's it going? Having fun with that odd patient?" the nurse said.

"Oh, you have no idea Margaret." Gerard felt a little relieved now that the tension of being in room E-4 left his mind. "He thinks there's an evil ghost called *Stan* that's after him. If he leaves the room, it'll kill him. Stupid isn't it?"

"What a freak," said Margaret shaking her head with disgust. "People like that should be locked away in a loony bin."

"Well it's not his fault. He may be mentally disturbed." Gerard scratched his head. "I'm still wondering who the hell beat him up."

"Probably did it to himself. Do you think he's suicidal?"

"No. But he needs help."

"Yeah," Margaret looked dejected and Gerard could sense it with her body language.

"Is everything okay?" said Gerard.

"It's just when you mentioned how that patient was beaten up. It reminded me of my friend, you know, my friend, Amy..."

"Is she okay?"

"She's having some marital issues. I'm sure she'll be fine." Margaret explained not going too much into details and waved her hand trying to dismiss or change the conversation.

"I'm sorry to hear that. I hope everything works out for Amy," said Gerard.

"I should get going." Margaret carried on with her business and rolled the table into a patient's room. Gerard also departed his own way leaving behind Margaret and the secrets of room E-4.

Amy stepped out into the night like a scared little child. Her husband was gone, but his truck was parked in the driveway. It appeared normal, but something was dreadfully wrong in the air. Amy's hair was blowing every which way, blinding her vision, so she had to constantly brush it back with her hands. She straight jacketed her arms around her body for warmth.

The dead cat lay in a puddle of mashed flesh and ooze. She briefly caught the cat's image in the corner of her eye, not wanting to fully observe the remains; she lurked away from it and headed towards the truck.

Something about the situation didn't make sense. She didn't want to see her husband again, but the whole scene made her curious and determined to find out what happen to him. She was driven with both fear and happiness. It was happiness that drove her to inspect the inside of the truck, hoping to find him dead inside. However, it was fear that made her want to run inside, lock the doors, and call the police. Curiosity took the best of her.

The keys were missing, but the doors were unlocked. Inside the truck, she opened the glove compartment withdrawing a flashlight. After investigating the inside and found no traces of her husband, she looked under the truck. The light shined in every direction,

but still, he wasn't underneath. She was perplexed and pierced the ray of light down the streets of darkness screaming his name. Of course, there was no response. She was frightened and found herself almost breathless with panicking, as if water was filling her lungs.

The wind became less of a nuisance as time flew by, much like the deceased cat. When she had first stepped outside, the wind made her skin crawl with shivers. This odd situation that plummeted on her moments ago now dismissed any other feelings. For a brief moment, she almost forgot all the years of misery and suffering being physically and mentally tortured by the hands of her bastard husband. She couldn't make sense of this strange situation in her mind, and couldn't think of rational explanations to fill in the gaps. Someone had to have driven her husband's truck here, and someone had to have opened the front door, she thought. *But why did that person run away? How could they so fast?*

She saw something on the hood of the truck. At first she couldn't tell what it was until her flashlight hovered over. It was someone's handwriting. The words were painted in a reddish substance, but it wasn't blood. Amy could still taste and smell the scent of her own blood imprinted in her senses for all the years of abuse. Then she came to a conclusion, it might be blood after all, but not fresh, it was old and dried.

She focused the light over the words and read:

***I FEED ON SUFFERING AND FEAR  
I WANT YOU INSIDE ME  
EVEN WHEN I LEAVE  
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY VICTIM***

Covering her mouth to hide her gasping shriek, she identified the handwriting. It was her husband's!

At the edge of the hood there was an arrow pointed towards the garage door. Amy was freaking out and not sure what to expect next. All she could do was helplessly flash the light on the garage door as the arrow instructed. In this very moment, a powerful burst of wind passed by her, almost as if it were alive and taunting or daring her to follow the crimson arrow. It led to another cryptic message, and after reading, she raced back inside the house fearing for her life! The message read:

***I'M STAN  
SAY MY NAME ON THE OUTSIDE WORLD  
THAT'S WHEN I'LL COME  
AND TAKE OVER***

This would be the last day for the unknown patient. Gerard and his supervisors, along with the other faculty, agreed it was time to move on. They called in the police and prepared the straight jackets to escort him to a place where he could get the proper help and medication. Gerard wanted to understand what was really going on with the man, but then again, Gerard knew there was no point trying to reason with an insane mind.

As Gerard stood outside the door of room E-4, he almost felt sorry for the poor guy. He hadn't done anything wrong, but he couldn't stay in the room forever. Today he

had no choice; the police were ready to drag the man out by the neck if it came down to that. A few cops, a couple doctors, Margaret, and some workers from the mental institution holding straight jackets and sedatives, accompanied Gerard's side.

"Hold on a sec," Gerard said. "Let me go in alone and talk to him. He's a nice guy and if all of you come in at once, he'll freak out. I owe it to him, just one last visit."

One of the other doctors said, "Well, I guess it's no trouble. You have five minutes. After that, we're coming in."

Margaret shook her head, "I'm telling you, loony bin," she mumbled under her breath and then another doctor nudged his shoulder into hers signaling to stop joking around.

"It won't take long," assured Gerard as he entered the room, locking the door for the first time. He then took a seat for the final time and crossed his legs as if he had not a care in the world. "There are people outside. They've come to take you away. Psycho!" He said with a chuckle and without sympathy or regret.

The man stood by the window, but this time his attention was distracted by Gerard's change in behavior. The wind appeared to be calming down, and then the man turned pale white. His heart was struck with fear as if the world crumbled into oblivion. He felt like a sharp sickle penetrated his soul. Something wasn't in the air today. The wind was fading and the man knew something else was different. That's when the truth hit him. "You...!" He pointed at the doctor speechless and shocked! "I got rid of you in the alley!"

Gerard smiled with a sinister grin and sat comfortably on the chair. "What are you talking about? Why are you pointing at me?"

The man froze with disbelief and dread. "You brought the evil in with you! I told you never to say its name outside these walls!" Then in an act of desperation, the man dashed for the door! He was about to scream for the others to help, but Gerard's reaction was quicker. He leaped out of his seat and tackled the man to the floor! He tried to fight back, but Gerard's strength outmatched his own. Gerard repeatedly punched the man's face to a bloody pulp and begun to strangle him.

"This is what happens when you tell people about me. I knew there would be a way to find you. If only you had stayed awake when you entered this room, things would have been a lot easier," a deranged Gerard said as his grip became tighter around the struggling man's neck. "You couldn't hide forever! But I don't need you anymore. I like this one better. Time to finish what *you* started."

As the man's life was slipping away by the seconds, he managed to gasp his last dying words, "Amy...I'm, so...s...o...r...r...y....."

The man was dead. Gerard stood and looked down on his former victim, but it wasn't Gerard anymore. He was something else, something darker, sinister...

The door was banging, but no one could enter. They would have to break it open with all their might. "*DOCTOR GERARD! WHAT'S GOING ON!? WHAT'S ALL THAT NOISE?! OPEN THIS DOOR! DOCTOR!*" Someone yelled on the other side trying to open the door as the doorknob turned and rattled. Fists banged and shoes kicked the door. They would knock it down soon, STAN thought, and arrest Doctor Gerard for the murder of this dead man. *But I can easily control someone else. It's a shame I can't stay in this body for too long. Oh well. There are millions of fearful people out there suffering. They'll all become my next victims, in time.*



